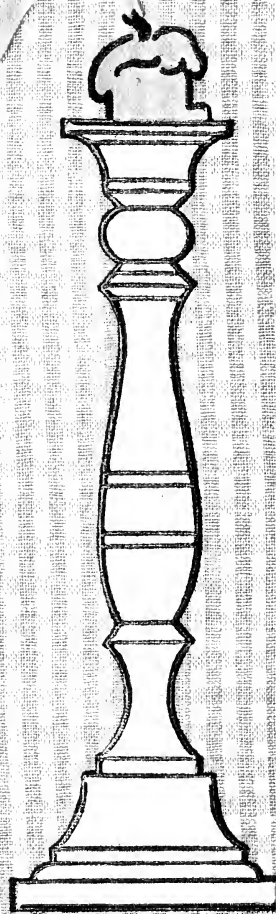
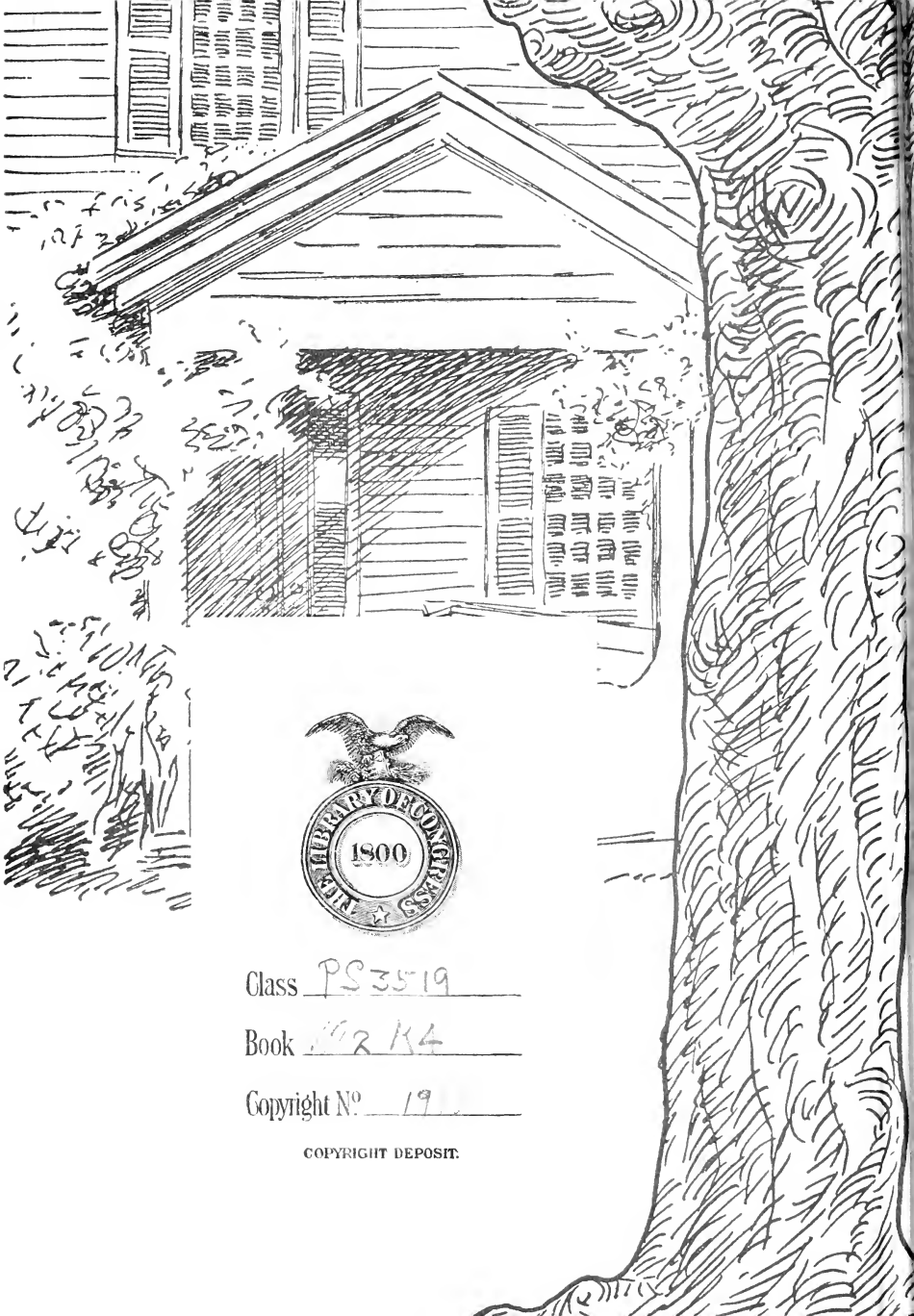


Rhymes of Home



Burges Johnson



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RHYMES OF HOME

BY
BURGES JOHNSON

Author of "Rhymes of Little Boys," "Pleasant
Tragedies of Childhood," etc.

I
MATING

II
BUILDING

III
YEAR IN AND YEAR OUT

IV
LITTLE FOLK

NEW YORK

PUBLISHERS

FG 3519
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Copyright, 1910,
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Published September, 1910.

The University Press, Cambridge, U. S. A.

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DEDICATION

IF only we knew just what Home is, there might be a rhyme about it to set upon this page. The house is not the Home; it is no more than a shell, and empty enough at times. Friendly chairs, a rug, a table, thumbed books, and some beloved picture — these are not Home, though the warmth and glow of Home, like reflected firelight, may flicker from them all. No, it cannot be defined; but this we do know: it is made up of sorrow as well as joy, and a multitude of treasured every-days. And it bears some close relationship to children. For if the word Home does not conjure at once to your mind some wee face, some shrill welcoming shout, some clinging little fist, it is almost sure to stir up a scene from your own childhood. The rhymes brought together here have but one excuse for their wide variety — a spirit of home bade the writing of them all. And one thing I do know about Home, — it may be found wherever She is, to whom I dedicate this book!

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Acknowledgment is due to *Harper's Magazine*, *Everybody's Magazine*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Ladies' World*, and *Leslie's Weekly* for permission to use a number of the poems brought together here.

MATING

HER PAINTED FAN

ELFIN skill, no power of man,
Since the mortal race began,
Could have wrought the slender fabric of
her dainty painted fan,
With its quaint old woodland scene,
And the lovers, mid the sheen
Of the sunlight sifting dreamily through
walls of leafy green.

As I sway it to and fro
I can feel the breezes blow,
And I hear the tender whisperings of lovers,
soft and low,
With the droning of the bees,
And the rustling of the trees,
And the far-off scent of roses borne like
incense on the breeze.
Only elfin fingers wrought,
For the fan is magic fraught,
As I touch it comes a vision, filling, sway-
ing every thought;

Her Painted Fan

And that quaint old woodland place,
Where the shadows interlace
With the branches, is but background for
the vision of her face.

THE ORACLE

“ONE, I love; Two, I love; Three, I
love I say,”

Dainty petals, one by one, lightly float
away.

Will thy secret ne'er be told, oracle of
white and gold?

“Four, I love with all my heart; Five, I
cast away,”

Snowy petals, still a score, marshaled in
array.

Yield thy secret, I entreat, saucy, smiling
Marguerite.

“He loves” — that I too well know,

“She loves” — only tell me so!

Though I bless thee for the word,

I would doubt the ear that heard.

The Oracle

Yield thy secret, I entreat; Love could
never wait.

Be it bitter, be it sweet, I would know my
fate;

I am kneeling at thy feet, heartless, charm-
ing, Marguerite!

Since Mary Came Back from Páree

SINCE MARY CAME BACK FROM PÁREE

SINCE Mary came back from Páree,
Ah me,
We coldly pass by on the street.
She really has no time for me, you see,
With counts and markees at her feet.
She wriggles her shoulders and murmurs
“Bongswaugh!” —
The prettiest shoulders that ever you
saw! —
And carries herself with such — avoidu-
pwaugh —
Since Mary came back from Páree.

Since Mary came back from Páree, Ah me,
She's broken my heart into bits.
Her other old sweethearts agree that she
Has taken French leave of her wits.

Since Mary Came Back from Paree

She pats her French poodle and eats a bon-
mot,
And does her hair “avec Champignons” —
such rot,
(You may think I am foreign myself, but
I'm not)
Since Mary came back from Paree.

Since Mary came back from Paree, Ah me,
I have n't got used to her yet.
I tremble a bit in the knee, je fee,
Whenever she tries her lorgnette.
But in her Parisienne gown she's a dear, —
Decollité skirt, made of blue cheffonier, —
(I'm not very firm in my phrases, I fear)
Since Mary came back from Paree.

Since Mary came back from Paree, Ah me,
She even has altered her name.
You'll always be Mary to me, Marie,
From now till the end of the game.

Since Mary Came Back from Paree

But if she continues with so much eclat,
I'll learn her queer lingo and woo her in
that. —

I have n't been happy in English, that's
flat,

Since Mary came back from Paree.

VERSES WITH NOSEGAYS
ON VALENTINE'S DAY

LADY fair, orchid rare
Loses luster in thy hair!
For it vies with thine eyes,
Where a rarer luster lies.
Lowly buds are these, but lo,
Heart and homage with them go!

Dear lady, these flowers I heap in your
arms
Are part of the tribute I pay to your
charms.
And if you don't care for the rhymes I'm
discursin',
And if you must smile at the halt in my
versin',
Blame Cupid, who gave me small time to
rehearse in!

Verses on Valentine's Day

O sweet queen of hearts, I pray love imparts
Importance to all of these flowers,
For never, I ween, may knave win a queen,
Unless he be one of the bowers!

FARMINGTON

WHEN Patience trod the village street
two hundred years ago,
The country-side was fairer far than in
these days, I'm told;
And all the bards and romanceers would
have us moderns know
That "nowadays" can never be like to
the days of old.
The skies were then a deeper blue, and
whiter was the snow,
When Patience trod the village street two
hundred years ago.

When Patience trod the village street in
that dim, bygone day,
The gray-haired blacksmith left his forge,
the scribe laid down his pen,
And all peered out to see her pass a-tripping
on her way —
For poets sing that village maids were far
more comely then.

Farmington

And gallant swains bore flint-lock guns to
fend them from the foe,
When Patience trod the village street
two hundred years ago.

Since Patience trod the village street, the
artist, Father Time,
Has not undone his handiwork — the
picture is the same;
Save that the gray majestic elms were then
but in their prime —
And Nature sings each year new songs
to put the bards to shame;
Full half the valley's fairest charms were
then unborn, I know,
When Patience trod the village street,
two hundred years ago.

And where she trod, now tread the feet
of groups of merry maids,
To make the scribe throw down his pen
and to the casement fly:

Farmington

A fig for bards and romanceers (who sit
behind drawn shades)

If they will leave To-day for me, I'll
give them Days Gone By!

For Patience in a golfing-cape is fairer far
I know

Than when she trod the village street
two hundred years ago.

WHEN CUPID FOUGHT
WITH FATHER TIME

HELPLESS I gazed upon the fray
When Cupid fought with Father
Time;

I viewed it as some pantomime,
Nor could I speak to bid them stay, —
Though my heart in the balance lay.

The battle theirs, — but mine the crime:
Helpless I gazed upon the fray
When Cupid fought with Father Time.

It was no battle of a day;

Watching, I heard the requiem chime
Of dying years that left me gray —
Slow years, that found me in my prime.
Helpless I gazed upon the fray
When Cupid fought with Father Time.

AN OLDE SERENADE

WHEN the twilight died away,
Cupid murmured o'er me, —
What I dare not tell by day,
Night may whisper for me.
Sweet Thy slumber, Sweetheart mine,
I'd not cause Thy waking,
If of one brief dream of Thine
I but had the making.

Softlie sleep,
Slumber deep,
God of Dreams his vigil keep;
If among his train, dream-laden,
Sweetest dream find sweetest maiden,
Swift a-wing,
It would bring
Smiles to Thee, a-slumbering!

Night draws round me like a shroud,
All ye world's in hiding;
O'er me, through a gloomy cloud,
Swift ye moon is gliding.

An Olde Serenade

If Thou wake not, I entreat,
By yon star above Thee,
That ye Dream-God tell Thee, Sweet,
Half of how I love Thee.

Softlie sleep,
Slumber deep,
God of Dreams his vigil keep;
Dream-stars, watching o'er Thy slumber,
Sing of love in countless number,
Till their song,
Sweet and strong,
Lingers with Thee all day long!

Clouds have hid each gleaming star,—
Darkness draws about me;
Darker, sadder, drearer far
Were my world without Thee.
Lo, the last faint beams depart,
While my Love lies dreaming,—
Night is never in my heart
Where Thy face is beaming.

An Olde Serenade

Softlie sleep,
Slumber deep,
God of Dreams his vigil keep ;
While the stars that twinkle o'er Thee,
Fading, fading, out before Thee,
Never shine, Sweetheart mine,
Half so bright as Thy dear eyne.

DREAMLAND

FAIR are the shores of the Dreamland
Isles,
Edged by a sea of mist,
Where every woodland beck and smiles,
And a cooling zephyr of Spring beguiles
To the land of the lovers' tryst.

Sweet are the songs of the Isle of Dreams,
Songs with no need of tongue;
And a memory, bitter-sweet it seems,
Through a dreamland melody glows and
gleams,
That the angels might have sung.

Dear are the thoughts of the Dreamland
Isles,
Thoughts of the days that were;
And where she roamed, the woodland smiles,
While every path she trod beguiles
To linger and dream of her.

AT SUNSET

MARK where the shadows of the twilight fall
And creep across the meadows to thy feet,
And lingering sunbeams pause to kiss thee,
Sweet,
Ere hurrying homeward at their lord's
recall
To wait with him night's dark and gloomy
pall.
But hark, I hear the rosy hills repeat
The promise of new day.

With swifter beat
My heart grows big with love of thee,
of all!
And vale and woodland voice a glad refrain;
While the full splendor of the golden glow
Rests on my vision with a weight of pain.
Why mar the glory of it with a show
Of gaudy words? Our silence is not vain —
Sweet silence, when thou knowest and I
know.

BUILDING

THE VILLAGE STREET

LARCH and maple and spreading elm,
In fluted and clustered colonnade —
Great-girthed branches that might have
strayed

From the wooded heart of a wilder
realm —

Stemming the sunlight that seeks to whelm
In a liquid torrent of yellow glow

The leaf-ships, sailing about below,

Guided by zephyrs at every helm;

While heaped up wrecks, red, gold, and
green,

Rustle softly about your feet.

Man's work is clothed in a golden sheen,

And God's work smiles and the air is
sweet:

Peace, God's peace, in the pleasant scene,

A-down the length of the village street.

THE SOUL OF THE HOUSE

LOCUST timbers, brick and stones
Are its bones;
And I saw them wrought together
In the keen autumnal weather,
Joint by joint and bone by bone to fit a
plan,
As sages build of fossil forms some unre-
membered man.

Lath and shingle for a skin
Clad it in;
And it took on form and feature
As of some familiar creature,
Standing silently in dull, repellent guise,
And soullessly it looked on me from staring
window-eyes.

My own soul-seed, deep in earth
At my birth,
Lay as lifeless and as hidden,
By the sun and rain unbidden,

The Soul of the House

Until Love had fed it smiles and tears and
toil, —

Then green and gracious buds of it came
forcing through the soil.

So my house there reared its head,
Cold and dead,

With a chill to linger always, —

Till Love breathed along its hallways,

Laughed and wept there, toiled and dreamt
there in the gloam;

Now those window-eyes are brimming with
the wakened soul of Home.

GHOSTS

“All houses wherein men have lived and died are haunted houses.”

MINE are not the grave-damp ghosts
Of some hoar and storied palace,
Haunt of long dead battle hosts,
Where each battered plate and chalice
Of its bloody looting boasts.

Not some old wives' gibbering specter
With no higher earthly aim
Than to howl and clank and hector,
Playing at a childish game,
Frightening its tomb's protector.

Yet my ghosts all seemed to yearn
For a human habitation
Friendlier than marbled urn,—
And the weight of obligation
Haunted me at every turn.

Ghosts

So our walls were reared amain
Fit to shield from bitter weather;
Not alone to house us twain
But to bid our ghosts together, —
Neither did we build in vain.

For we saw that shrines were made
In the house of our belonging,
So that when the hearth was laid,
Friendly spirits round it thronging
Crowded out each evil shade.

Set we heirlooms here and there,
Jetsam of old days and graces;
With the pride that is a prayer
Set we them in honored places.
Toward these shrines our phantoms fare.

Daily up and down the stair
Forms we knew and loved are flitting,
Room to room and here and there, —
Or as One I oft find sitting
In that slight old-fashioned chair.

Ghosts

All the thoughts that measure true
 To Her gentle heart's conviction;
Deeds She might have bid us do,
 Win a blessèd benediction
O'er the home She never knew.

Many a long-forgotten one
 Comes with loving eyes and jealous
To the home but just begun,
 Pleading for a spirit zealous
At some task he left undone.

So as friends they gather near,
 Warning us by their dead errors,
Stirring us to persevere;
 And the darkness holds no terrors
With our ghosts to give us cheer!

THE BUILDING OF AN
ADIRONDACK LODGE

SING, sing,
While the hammers ring:
The fragrant yellow timbers swing
And creak — and strain —
To a glad refrain
Of the rasping saw and the driving plane,
While plank meets beam in a firm caress —
Building a lodge in the wilderness.

The timid folk
Of the woods awoke
At the alien sound of the hammer stroke,
And fled afar in a frightened throng;
But the forest smiled
At each throbbing child
And bid it join in the Building Song —

“ Sing, sing,
While the hammers ring:
It is not fear that the builders bring,

The Building of an Adirondack Lodge

And the rasping saw
In the timbers raw
Is serving those who love my Law.
Put by thy fear and thy vague distress,
Be glad for the lodge in the wilderness."

The mountain heard,
And his great heart stirred
At sound of the forest-mother's word,
And he spake to the mists that were flying
free:
And he called aloud
To the black storm-cloud, —
And his voice was the voice of the mighty
sea: —

" Sing, sing,
While the hammers ring:
I too know those who do this thing!
The summers fleet
Have seemed more sweet
Since first they nestled at my feet.
'T is mine to guard from storm and stress
The rising lodge in the wilderness."

The Building of an Adirondack Lodge

The lofty pine — the trailing vine,
All cry “ Guard well that hearth of thine,
Ye roof and rafters reared above!”
And the echoing sigh
Of the lake floats by —
“ Keep guard, ye walls, o’er those we love!”

Sing, sing,
While the hammers ring:
The great trees sway in welcoming:
The sharp blows fall
While the wood-folk call —
And the forest-mother answers all —
“ Sing, sing, in thy happiness,
And welcome the lodge in the wilderness.”

COMPLETION

JUST a little strip of land —
Can it be?
Far away, a gleam of sand,
And the sea.

I had dreamed of such a thing
In some sunny, bygone Spring,
But the fancies all took wing
With the winter's jeopardy.

There's a cottage door thrown wide;
Can it be?
Broad-porched, where the sunbeams hide;
And a tree, —
And perhaps a bit of sod
Where the drooping branches nod, —
Such a spot I scarce had trod,
Ran my fancy e'er so free!

All the tightening bonds of home —
Can it be?
Hope of green buds 'neath the loam;
And I see

Completion

Down the vista of the years
Other hopes transcending fears, —
Hopes that shimmer through the tears
 Of a tenderest memory.

But the love that all-pervades —
 Can it be?
When each bud bursts, blooms and fades,
 And the tree
Is a ruin crowned with vine;
Yet that priceless gift of thine
Will be hearth and home of mine
 Unto all eternity.

YEAR IN AND YEAR OUT

REALIZATION

OF the fabric of filmy dreams, Dear,
I wrought in the days gone by,
And I built me a land whose golden strand
Lay under a shining sky;
None knew the road to that far abode
Save only my dreams and I.

There were paths for my every whim,
Dear, —
Hills for the boldest view,—
For humbler moods the valley roads
To deeds that I meant to do:
And byways fair found vistas rare
All fashioned of hopes come true.

There came a maid to my dreams, Dear,
One time as I wandered wide,
And it scarcely seemed that I could have
dreamed
That we wandered side by side;
For hand in hand we roamed the land,
And the world was glorified.

Realization

That realm is fading away, Dear,
Its heights I can scarce define;
The winding road to the far abode
Is a tangle of weed and vine.
Yet—wondrous thing!—though the dreams
took wing,
Her hand still rests in mine.

Why Doth a Pussy Cat?

WHY DOTH A PUSSY CAT?

WHY doth a pussy cat prefer,
When dozing, drowsy, on the sill,
To purr and purr and purr and purr
Instead of merely keeping still?
With nodding head and folded paws
She keeps it up without a cause.

Why doth she flaunt her lofty tail
In such a stiff right-angled pose?
If lax and limp she let it trail
'T would seem more restful, goodness
knows!

When strolling 'neath the chairs or bed
She lets it bump above her head.

Why doth she suddenly refrain
From anything she's busied in,
And start to wash, with might and main,
Most any place upon her skin?
Why doth she pick that special spot,
Not seeing if it's soiled or not?

Why Doth a Pussy Cat?

Why doth she never seem to care
To come directly when you call,
But makes approach from here and there,
Or sidles half around the wall?
Though doors are opened at her mew,
You often have to push her through.

Why doth she this? Why doth she that?
I seek for cause, — I yearn for clews;
The subject of the pussy cat
Doth endlessly inspire the mews.
Why doth a pussy cat? Ah me,
I have n't got the least idee!

REMARKS TO MY GROWN-
UP PUP

BY rules of fitness and of tense,
By all old canine precedents,
Oh Adult Dog, the time is up
When I may fondly call you Pup.
The years have sped since first you stood
In straddle-legged puppyhood, —
A watch-pup, proud of your renown,
Who barked so hard you tumbled down.
In Age's gain and Youth's retreat
You've found more team-work for your feet,
You drool a soupçon less, and hark!
There's fuller meaning to your bark.
But answer fairly, whilom pup,
Are these full proof of growing up?

I heard an elephantine tread
That jarred the rafters overhead:
Who leaped in mad abandon there
And tossed my slippers in the air?

Remarks to my Grown-up Pup

Who, sitting gravely on the rug,
Espied a microscopic bug
And stalked it, gaining bit by bit, —
Then leapt in air and fell on it?
Who gallops madly down the breeze
Pursuing specks that no one sees,
Then finds some ancient boot instead
And worries it till it is dead?
I have no adult friends who choose
To gnaw the shoe-strings from my shoes, —
Who eat up twine and paper scraps
And bark while they are taking naps.
Oh Dog, you offer every proof
That stately age yet holds aloof.
Grown up? There's meaning in the
phrase
Of dignity as well as days.
Oh why such size, beloved pup? —
You've grown enough, but not grown up.

RHAPSODY ON A DOG'S
INTELLIGENCE

DEAR dog, that seems to stand and
gravely brood

Upon the broad veranda of our home

With soulful eyes that gaze into the
gloom —

With speaking tail that registers thy
mood, —

Men say thou hast no ratiocination;

Methinks there is a clever imitation.

Men say again thy kindred have no souls,

And sin is but an attribute of men;

Say, is it chance alone that bids thee, then,

Choose only garden spots for digging holes?

Why dost thou filch some fragment of the
cooking

At times when no one seemeth to be
looking?

Rhapsody on a Dog's Intelligence

Was there an early Adam of thy race,
And brindled Eve, the mother of thy
house,
Who shared some purloined chicken with
her spouse,
Thus causing all thy tribe to fall from
grace?

If fleas dwelt in the garden of that Adam
Perhaps thy sinless parents never had 'em.

This morn thou cam'st a-slinking through
the door,
Avoiding eyes, and some dark corner
sought,
And though no accusation filled our
thought,

Thy tail, apologetic, thumped the floor.
Who claims thou hast no conscience,
argues vainly,
For I have seen its symptoms very plainly.

What leads thee to forsake thy board and
bed
On days that are devoted to thy bath?
For if it is not reason yet it hath

Rhapsody on a Dog's Intelligence

Appearance of desire to plan ahead!

The sage who claims thy brain and soul be
wizen

Would do quite well to swap thy head for
his'n.

ANY HOUSEWIFE TO ANY
CRUMB

I WILL seek you through the room with
my broom,

Little crumb.

Ha! Have at thee! To thy doom

Now succumb!

You were meant for something greater,

You 'd a nobler raison d'être,

Than the curses of the waiter,

Little crumb.

For in realms of literature you endure,

Little crumb;

And to social status sure

You have come.

Tablecloth and silver tray,

Scraper, brush, and napkin gay

Toil for you three times a day,

Little crumb.

My Housewife to my Crumb

But you were my childhood's foe, long ago,

Little crumb;

My betrayer, even though

You were dumb. —

And in bed, when I dared eat,

You would creep around the sheet

And all night annoy my feet,

Little crumb.

Insignificant and small as you fall,

Little crumb,

And of no account at all

Unto some,

I am sure Goliath was

Half your size, for dear me Suz!

Mighty is as mighty does,

Little crumb.

SLEEPLESSNESS

THE Day's at war with Night
 Within my weary brain.
The helpless, broken battleground
Throbs 'neath the whirl of Sight and Sound
And prays for Sleep in vain
To end the fight.
The Day's at war with Night;
The foemen fast increase,
And mobs of maddened Daytime Thought
Through frenzied hours have fiercely fought
Till panic reigns. And Peace
Flees in affright.
 Tick tock
 Hear the ticking of the clock
Wee, wounded Dreams,
All faint of breath,
In dying, raise their stricken heads
And view the victor, where he treads
A track that teems
With death.

Sleeplessness

Tick tock tick tock

Hark! But shall a Peaceful Sound
Live long on such a battleground —
While all the four horizons rock
With din and crash and cry and shock,
And babel shouts abound?

Yet I mark

How the Dark

Yields not to their whelming might —
Bends, but does not break in flight;
Forward leaping, creeping, crawling
Toward the foe in force appalling, —
Like a reënforcement falling
Where the fire of conflict burns!

In a rally, Sight and Sound

Seek in vain to hem it round,

Shriek again and yet again,

Mass in front their mighty men —

Yet the tide of battle turns.

While they keep

Silence deep

Creeping come the scouts of Sleep.

Tick tock

Calmly, softly, sounds the clock

Sleeplessness

Sleep holds unbroken sway,
The Dream-tribes in her train
Upon the peaceful battleground
In trim white tents encamp around.
And Night has conquered Day
Within my weary brain.

CLAMMING

OH sing your songs of the silly chase,
And listen he who will,
Of red-clad men who madly race
Perspiring up a hill,
And flop-eared dogs that run about
A-mouthing savage bays,
While some lone fox among the rocks
Looks on in mild amaze.

Oh lilt your lays of the coveyed quail
'Mid the covers' matted thorn,
And a patient dog with an index tail,
In place of a huntsman's horn;
Sing too of your sylvan water-hole
With paw-prints all about,—
But me for the reach of a clammy beach
When the tide is running out!

A four-pronged fork of handy size,
And a bucket in our hand,

Clamming

With downcast, steady, searching eyes
We stalk the salt sea strand.
And what's the whir of a startled wing,
Or a guide's monition curt, —
What's Tally Ho, to the cry we know —
"AHOY! THE CLAMS! THEY SQUIRT!"

The tide was low in old Cow Bay,
The opal sea was ca'm,
When scarce I'd started on my way
I flushed a flock of clam!
A skillful dig with my sturdy steel,
And the leader I had bagged,
Before he'd stirred to warn the herd,
I had him bound and gagged.

Ye butcher-men whose scatt'ring shot
May spread a field with gore,
I gain a finer thrill, I wot,
In digging on the shore.
Your desecrating, dreadful bangs
Reëcho through a grove;
My skillful wrist, my thrust and twist
Reveal the treasure trove.

Clamming

I too can miss my aim as well;
It chills one's pulsing blood
To pounce upon a noble shell
And find it full of mud.
When you, home-bent, are gore begrimed,
I'm stained with cleanly dirt;
'Mid ozone sweet, up-shore I beat,
And sing, "Ahoy! They squirt!"

P.S. — They're washed within a pot
And drained until they're white.
They're covered, on a stove that's hot —
(Add water half their height).
They're done the minute they boil up;
Oh joy too vast to utter!
You drink the bouillon from a cup
And dip the clams in butter.

MEXICO

BLLOW, you sweet southwestern breezes,—
All my sky is grim and gray!

Blow, before my spirit freezes

In a land where ice-fiends play.

Soften these unsmiling faces,

Mould them with a gentle hand;

Bring a hint of Latin graces,

Whisper of a *lazy* land.

Saw you any cactus blooming,

Heavy-scented, white as snow?

Swaying cane-fields wave their pluming,—

And against a sunset glow

Ragged purple mountains looming?—

Saw you aught of Mexico?

Blow, you turbulent northeasters,

Sweeping down on mighty wing!

Blow, you frozen-hearted feasters

Who devour the buds of spring.

Howl and whine about my casement,

Spirits of a leaden sky—

Mexico

Leave your mantles of effacement
 Gleaming white as you hurl by.
See, my spirit leaps and strides you,
 Shouting with you as you go —
Toward the fair southwest it rides you,
 Leaving gloom and storm and snow;
Toward a balmy doom it guides you, —
 Sweet and sunny Mexico.

I am driving great-horned cattle
 Where the tiny deer-tracks lead.
I am bent in merry battle
 With a wiry, stubborn steed.
While my soul sings glad hosanna,
 Breathing life, and leaving care
To a faint and far mañana, —
 In the land of open air.
What though every wind be sweeping
 Through this gray land to and fro,
In my dreams my heart is leaping
 To some wild sweet songs I know, —
With those rainbow mountains keeping
 Mystic guard in Mexico.

TRAVEL

THERE'S a challenge that mere Distance
Seems to flaunt, in grim resistance,
At the spirit of a man.
How it courts annihilation,
Till we rend it with elation,
Span from span!

With our warhorses of thunder
Do we puny mortals plunder
Miles and moments of their power,
Passing Nature's stoutest barriers,
With our iron-sinewed carriers
In an hour.

And our pride craves new dominions
With the strengthening of our pinions,
With new forces at command;
Till no spot seems fair to stay in,
With the whole wide world to play in,
Sea or land.

Travel

We were nomads, ever ranging,
Gypsies camping, flitting, changing —
 Bidding endless paths unfold,
Save that in each heart deep-hidden
Lies a force that moves unbidden,
 Uncontrolled.

There 's a tugging whose insistence
Seems to grow with greater distance,
 As a continent we roam,
And an endless skein behind us
Holds a slender thread that binds us
 Fast to Home.

Come then, Sweetheart, join my travel,
See the warp of roads unravel,
 See old vistas wrought anew;
Though 't were desert, field, or heather,
Yet when we fare forth together,
 Home comes too!

THE HUMBLE PILGRIM

HOPING, groping, stumbling on, —
Finding thorns where I seek a staff,
Tripped by stones that were steps anon,
I know not where is my rightful path:
The torch that lured me forth is gone.
What though a stretch of plainer way
Cheers me on to the unknown mark,
Bids me feel that I may not stray, —
Signposts, looming out of the dark,
Cry confusion and bid me stay.

.

Hoping, groping bravely on,
You make some hind'ring thorn a staff;
Each stumbling-block you mount upon!
No old-time torch can light your path,
'T would only blind you if it shone!
What though the signposts bid you stay, —
The one who reared them knew not you;
They only stand to mark *his* way.
You cannot keep a goal in view,
To-day wants more than Yesterday!

DEATH AND THE
SCULPTOR

(Bas-relief by D. C. French)

“**R**EST awhile, thou sturdy worker,”
And the weary one obeyed,
While his mallet fell beside him
And his upraised hand was stayed;
And his eyes were full of wonder —
Naught of terror or alarm, —
As he saw the angel near him,
Felt her touch upon his arm.

“Rest awhile, thou sturdy worker,
Lo, thy toil to-day is done,”
And the artist turned in wonder
From the task but scarce begun.
For his soul was in his labor —
In his eyes a question lay,
Yet the eyes of Death were kindly,
And he laid the tools away.

Death and the Sculptor

“Rest awhile, thou sturdy worker,”
And the question he would ask
In her eyes has found an answer —
We but see the half-done task,
And our grieving hearts grow bitter
Left to battle on alone,
Measuring a Father’s wisdom
With the measure of our own.

WHEN OLD AGE COMES

IF God grant me old age
I would see some things finished;
 some outworn;
 Some stone prepared for builders yet
 unborn.
Nor would I be the sated, weary sage
 Who sees no strange new wonder in
 each morn.
And with me there on what men call the
 shelf
 Crowd memories from which I cull the
 best, —
 And live old strifes, old kisses, some old
 jest;
For if I be no burden to myself
 I shall be less a burden to the rest.

When Old Age Comes

If God grant you old age,
I'll love the record writ in whitened
hair,
I'll read each wrinkle wrought by pa-
tient care,
As oft as one would scan a treasured page,
Knowing by heart each sentence graven
there.
I'd have you know life's evil and life's
good,
And gaze out calmly, sweetly on it all —
Serene with hope, whatever may befall;
As though a love-strong spirit ever stood
With arm about you, waiting any call.

If God grant us old age,
I'd have us very lenient toward our
kind,
Letting our waning senses first grow
blind
Toward sins that youthful zealots can
engage,
While we hug closer all the good we
find.

When Old Age Comes

I'd have us worldly foolish, heaven wise,
Each lending each frail succor to with-
stand,
Ungrudging, ev'ry mortal day's demand;
While fear-fed lovers gaze in our old eyes,
And go forth bold and glad and hand in
hand.

LITTLE FOLK

WHEN THE CHILD IS KING

BABE, so long ago enshrined
In a stable bare and gray,
Something of Thy sweeter mind,
Of Thy love for all Thy kind,
Rules us on Thy natal day.
And because a shepherd band, —
Sages, too, with gifts in train, —
Knelt and kissed a baby hand,
Yearning for some wee command,
So to-day a child shall reign.

FORTIFIED

LITTLE dear heart, tiny wonderer,
With round eyes that search clean
through one,

Little tender-fisted sunderer

Of my old world and my new one, —
Whence the sunbeam warm that dances
In those mirthful baby glances?

If that other world endowed thee
With a soul of crystal clearness,
When our dullened earth has cowed thee
With its mortal burden's nearness,
Who am I to give thee training
To withstand a life's explaining?

Even now I see an answer
In the little arms upflinging,
In thy dimples, wee entrancer,
And thy blithesome, wordless singing.
Love and gentleness and joying
May withstand old Earth's annoying.

fortified

Though this life's thick fogs be clouding
 Recollections of some other,
May no mist-bank e'er come crowding
 'Twixt thee, wee one, and thy mother.
Hers the gifts for thy preserving:
I but hope to share in serving!

A TOAST

TOAST a tyrant band, — *skoel* in sacred
chorus!

Slaves to our command, — czars who
trample o'er us.

Devotees of wrath; source of half our
troubles;

In whose cyclone path cost of living
doubles.

Harmless as the doves; butts of fierce
invective;

Life's true spice, and love's unconfessed
objective.

Gods of our best selves, bidding us confess
'em;

Fairyland's true elves, — To Our Kids, God
Bless 'Em!

BALLADE OF THE LITTLE
THINGS THAT COUNT

THE furrow's long behind my plow —
My field is strewn with stones of care,
And trouble gathers thick enow
As years add silver to my hair.
Could I an easier path prepare
For baby feet that start to mount? —
Save them a bit of wear and tear, —
And show the little things that count?

I see a tiny maiden bow
O'er slate and pencil, in her chair:
A little pucker on her brow,
A little tousle in her hair.
And one wee tear has fallen where
The crooked figures grin and flout;
My heart goes reaching to her there —
I love the little things that count!

Little Things that Count

Arithmetic is such a slough —

A Pilgrim's swamp of full despair.

But Discipline will not allow

My hand to point a thoro'fare.

Harsh figures face us everywhere,

O'erwhelming in their vast amount;

Must she so soon their burden bear? —

I love the little things that count!

Stern Teacher, must she ever fare

Alone to Learning's chilly fount?

There is so much I long to share —

I *love* the Little Things That Count!

GRACE

DEAR Lord, bless my bread and meat,
And everything I drink and eat,
And let them make me well and strong
To keep from ever doing wrong.
I thank thee, Lord, each day again
For guarding little boys. Amen.

A REGGERLER WRIGGLER

WHEN you was as little as me, did
you care
If they made you stand still while they
fooled with your hair,
And combed it and brushed it and told you
“There, there!”?
Nurse says, when she lays down the comb
with a slam,
I’m a reggerler wiggler, — maybe I am.

When I’m doing my lessons or eating my
meals
I have to be still as a mouse, till it feels
As if I *must* pound on the floor with my
heels.
At church it is awful, — the folks all
declare
I’m a reggerler wiggler while I am there.

A Reggerler Wiggler

It is n't so easy, this trying to keep
Quite still in the daytime, — it hurts me a
heap.

And they seem to forget that I 'm still when
I sleep.

I think little boys who sit still are a
sham;

I'm a reggerler wiggler, that's what *I*
am!

ANTHROPOLOGY

I LOVE my *ordernery* dolls the best
Of any kind that ever could be bought.
No foreign doll that Santy ever brought
Is near so nice, no matter how she 's dressed.
I hope my Chinese doll has never guessed
That I don't love him half of what I
ought!

I take good care to see that he is taught
His lessons oftener than all the rest.

I wish the Dolly-maker would begin
' To mend his ways; I would if I was he!
'Cause if the dolls that have a yellow skin
Are heathenish inside as they can be,
Just think how *sensibuller* he'd have been
To make 'em all Americans like me.

STRATEGIC

WHENEVER I am playing, and I want
to rest a bit,
I can't lie down a minute, or even stop to
sit,
But I hear a Grown-up say,
"You're tired out at play!
Come! Lay aside your little toys, — they'll
do another day."

And so I have decided that I really can't
afford
To have 'em find me resting of my very
own accord,
Cause some one comes along
Who says "You are not strong, —
You had n't oughta play so hard, it certainly
is wrong."

Strategic

That's why I keep a skipping and a running
in and out
Until I'm really certain that no Grown-ups
are about;
And then I slip away
Just a minute from my play,
And rest as hard as possible to last me
through the day.

LOSTED

I FEEL so far from anywheres!
Perhaps my family
Has got so many other cares
They've all forgotted me.
I s'pose I'll starve to skin an' bone
If I stay losted here alone.

My little dog, he founded me,
An' wagged his tail an' whined,
But he can't lead me home, for he
Is taught to walk behind.
And so I'm crying yet, becuz
I'm just as losted as I was.

NO TRAVELER

I 'D love to ride on railroads every day
And sit up by the window, — would n't
you?

To watch the world all rush the other way
And make believe where it is running to.
But once — it was n't far —
I took Kitty on a car,
And I guess there 's lots of other things a
cat 'd rather do.

A kitty does n't care about the view,
And she 's frightened by the jiggle of
the floor;
It makes you feel ashamed to have her
mew,
But she 's stronger 'n she ever was before!
Though traveling is fun.
With almost any one,
I never want to travel with a kitty any more.

“Hear my Dollies’ Prayer”

“HEAR MY DOLLIES’ PRAYER”

O LORD, I pray Thee, hear my dollies’
prayer,

And teach them how to ask for what is
right;

But if it’s going to give You extra care,
Then You might skip *My* blessings for
to-night.

Please make them all more loving and
polite;

I pray Thee not to let their covers tear,
But keep their sawdust stuffings out of
sight,

And please help Anne to grow a head of
hair.

I wish poor Bella’s knees were made to
bend,

I truly am as sorry as can be.

“Hear my Dollies’ Prayer”

I hope that You won't mind, and that
You'll send

The blessings that each dolly asks of
Thee.

And, Lord, I pray that You will just
pertend

This is my dollies talking, 'stead of me.

MENDING DAY

HOW quickly children's clothes will rip
and tear!

Each time I put off mending till so late,
I re'lize that a family of eight

Can give a loving mother lots of care.
If more get born I really do declare
I'll put 'em into bed and make 'em wait.
My brother hopes to learn to *operate*,
But there is not a child that I would spare.

He's borrowed three that he pertends are
dead.

But I won't even think of such a thin'!
And yet at mending time I've often said
I almost wished — though p'raps it is a
sin —

That God had sent *some* paper dolls instead
Whose clothes are only painted on their
skin.

THE MISSIONARY'S
DAUGHTER

I HAVE N'T sewed my children's clo'se
For days, the way I'd like to do;
I don't neglect 'em, goodness knows,
'Cept when it is my duty to;
They're less important, anyhow,
'Cause I'm a missionary now.

My heathen doll's not half so dear
As all my Christian children there,
And that's what makes my duty clear
To always give him speshul care;
'Cause I have found it wrong to do
The things I'm always wanting to.

GOOD HUNTING

TABLE-LEG Jungle is dark and still,
There's snakes in the Carpet Glade,
And lions and tigers on Sofa Hill,
But I'm never a bit afraid.
My dog, I know, is a trusty brute,
And I've got a gun that'll really shoot.

Once there was Indians under the bed,
But I hunted 'em all away;
There's elephants hiding there now in-
stead—

They're perfectly safe to-day,
'Cause I'm near the cavern of Easy-Chair,
And I scent the track of a Teddy Bear!

If I was like nurse or like baby Sis,
What never has fired a gun,
I guess I would n't be brave as this!
They'd both of 'em cry and run.
But I'll stalk him down and I'll shoot him
through,
And I'll make him into a Teddy-stew.

THE BACKWARD CLASS

I TELL them all that A's for APPETITE,
And B's a BONE, and C's a Pussy CAT,
And though they do not pay attention
quite

The way they should, I think they
growled at that.

They've been to school all day there
on the mat,

And yet they will not learn their letters
right;

Their little tummies are so very fat
I fear their brains are crowded just a mite.

I cannot make them *consecrate* their thought,
Not even though I scold them some, and
frown.

They don't get half the discipline they
ought,

Their eyes are so affectionate and brown!
I don't believe that scholars *can* be taught
Who lick your face and bark and tumble
down.

THE FLY IN THE
OINTMENT

I NEVER care when my feet are wet,
Though grown-ups worry so;
I never trouble how cold I get,
I'm tougher 'n people know.
And the coldest kind of a day just suits, —
But I hate when snow gets into my boots.

I like it often to storm and blow,
And not every day be fair.
I run and jump in the deepest snow:
When a snowball hits me square
I ain't the kind that hollers and scoots, —
But I hate when snow gets into my boots.

I'd never button my coat at all
If people would let me be.
I ain't afraid when I slip and fall
In snowdrifts up to my knee.
And the drifts in front of our houses are
beauts! —
But I hate when snow gets into my boots.

AT THE AQUARIUM

FISHES swimming in and out
Till my eyes grow dizzy,
What's the task that you're about,
Keeping you so busy?

Are you meant, as people say,
Just to throw a hook at,—
Or be brought from far away,
For us all to look at?

Dogs and horses know my words,
Cats are warm and homey;
Cows and mice and even birds
Sometimes get to know me.

Yet you stare with not a wink,
Seeming not to see me.
Are there thoughts we both can think,—
Something strange and dreamy?

At the Aquarium

I may puzzle you as much!
And I wonder whether,
When I see your noses touch,
You all talk together.

There's another world, it seems,
That you drift and dart in,
Full of ways and deeds and dreams
I can have no part in.

“PALS”

I 'VE learnt to sift the flour in, and the
way it ought to mix,
And I know that more is needed if the stuff
is soft and sticks.
I'm not just sure of *all* the things you need
for making dough,
But that's the sort of kind of thing a man
don't have to know.
Cook says I'm such a help to her that
every day she wishes
I could be there advising her and licking
off the dishes.

RUNNED AWAY

DEAR SIS: I wrote this noat to say Ive ben an gone an runned away; I gess the fambily Ive got wunt miss me such a nawful lot, cuz yesterday you no I had a nawful wollupin from dad an nurse she scolded me like fun fer sumpthin some one else had dun. Last night ma sent me off to bed before Id got a chapter read. It shows, so fur as I kin see, that no one cares a rap fer me. I gess that I aint understood and so Ive run away fer good. But sis if there is pie to-day fer dinner, snake a piece away, and bring it to me when your able, youll find me hiding in the stable.

COWS

WHO'S afraid of a cow?
They're so gentle and kind
You can go up quite close
And they none of 'em mind,
And they like little girls, so I've heard
people say —
But I wish — O I wish they was further
away!

Pooh — who's afraid?
They're as good as can be,
An' one's a child-cow that is younger than
me.
They give us good milk — an' there's noth-
ing to fear —
But I wish, O I wish that my Daddy was
here!

WITH SISTER'S DOLLS

DOLLS are silly things to play with,
There's so much a boy *prefers*;
But at times I have to stay with
Sister when she tends to hers.

And besides I often find her,
(For you know how young she is!)
Needing some one to remind her
Of her 'sponsibilities.

*Anne and Lucy, Tot and Ted,
Do you dollies s'pose
That it's right to go to bed
Wearing all your clo'se?
Your Mamma's too young, I s'pect,
To be scolded for neglect!*

I'm a year and one month older
Than my sister is, and she
Can't expect (so Mother's told her)
To sit up as late as me.

With Sister's Dolls

So each night, when she is sleeping,
It's my duty for awhile
Just to see if she is keeping
All her dolls in proper style.

*Anne and Lucy, Tot and Ted,
Listen here to me!
Every night you go to bed
Wicked as can be.
Don't you s'pose that Some one cares
If you never say your prayers?*

THE ANXIOUS FARMER

IT was awful long ago
That I put those seeds around;
And I guess I ought to know
When I stuck 'em in the ground.
'Cause I noted down the day
In a little diary book, —
It's gotten losted somewheres and
I don't know where to look.

But I'm certain anyhow
They've been planted most a week;
And it must be time by now
For their little sprouts to peek.
They've been watered every day
With a very speshul care,
And once or twice I've dug 'em up to
see if they was there.

I fixed the dirt in humps
Just the way they said I should;
And I crumbled all the lumps
Just as finely as I could.

The Anxious Farmer

And I found a nangle-worm
A-poking up his head,—
He maybe feeds on seeds and such,
and so I squushed him dead.

A seed 's so very small,
And dirt all looks the same;—
How can they know at all
The way they ought to aim?
And so I'm waiting round
In case of any need;
A farmer ought to do his best for
every single seed!

UNREST

THE motorman bangs on his noisy gong
And grins at folks as he whoops
along,

Or stops up quick to jerk us:

Wish 't I was him! But I'd like it more

As a druggist-clerk in a city store,

A-mixing soda and fizz and pop,—

Or I'd be the help in a candy shop,

Or one of the boys to mind the bell,

In a uniform in a big hotel

If it did n't over-work us!

Or I'd be a tramp, 'cause his folks don't
care

If he's washed his face or has brushed his
hair;

Or else be a missionary, so

That I could get foreign stamps, you know:

But best of all I would like to go

And be a clown at a circus.

There's other things I might like to be—

I know I'm tired of being Me!

THE CHINESE DOLL AND
THE BABY

WHOSE dolly is you?
Dearie me! I declare
Your eyes are tipped up and they 've pulled
out your hair;
And your snub little nose, and your fingers
and toes
And your curious clo'se
Kind of frighten me, too!
Whose dolly is you?

Whose dolly is you?
Dearie me! Can it be
They are tired of dollies, 'way over the sea?
Does nobody care for a baby out there,
But cuddles a bear
Or a doggie or two?
Whose dolly is you?

Whose dolly is you?
Did they send you to me

The Chinese Doll and the Baby

'Cause they know I'm as lonesome as lonesome
can be?

I'd like to have dollies like me, for a while,

But I've gone out of style, —

I'm nobody's, too!

Whose dolly is you?

WHEN I GET INTO BED

I'M never frightened in the dark,
Though I am very small;
I never sit all scared and hark
For Ogres in the hall.
But when my prayers are said
I have one awful dread,
That something waits to grab my toes
When I get into bed!

I try to think of pleasant things
Each time I get undressed;
And how each day no evil brings
If children do their best.
But the thought comes in my head,
As I'm turning down the spread,
That *something's* going to grab my toes
As I get into bed.

And when there's nothing more to do,
With bedclothes open wide,
It makes me shiver through and through
A-trying to decide

When I get into Bed

Which foot shall go a-head,
'Cause I'm sure I'd tumble dead
If something ever grabbed my toes
As I get into bed.

ACCOUNTING OF STOCK

COME here, little girl, come here!
Your daddy has serious fears
That no one took care, when combing your
hair,
To see what became of your ears.
Why, bless me! I should n't have said
There was one on each side of your head!
But p'raps it is done that way, for the fun
Of hearing two secrets as easy as one!

Come here, little girl, come here!
Your daddy is anxious to see
If that nose is in place on your dear little
face
Just where it's intended to be.
Dear, dear, it's too round at the end!
But that'll be easy to mend, —
A little girl's nose grows just where it
grows
So it'll be easy to pinch, I suppose.

Accounting of Stock

Come here, little girl, come here!

Your daddy with trouble is tossed.

It's ages since he has counted to see

That none of your toes have been lost.

Thank goodness! there 's ten of 'em here, —

There was no occasion for fear.

But everyone knows a little girl's toes

Should *all* hurry with her wherever she
goes.

Come here, little girl, come here!

And cure your poor daddy's alarms.

He really can't say, from so far away,

If you've got the right number of arms.

What! No more than two? Is that right?

They ought to be fastened in tight.

But two is n't bad, — and I'm specially
glad

They're so well adjusted for hugging your
dad!

ECONOMISIN'

PA was tickled when I went
Once and whispered in his ear
That I would n't spend a cent
Buyin' him a gift this year.
I would build a fine surprise
All myself, and 'conomise.

So I went and bought a saw —
Not a toy, but good and strong, —
And a hammer with a claw
For the nails I hammer wrong.
I am sure he'll like this more
Than a present from a store.

Then Pa bought some fancy wood
When I asked him, though I'm sure
If he's 'quisitive he could
Guess I'm makin' furniture.
If he does, I need n't care,
For he'll never guess a *chair!*

Economisin'

And I went and bought a bitt —
 Makes holes any size I choose:
Lots of fixin's come with it
 That I'm learnin' how to use.
P'raps for Christmas time, next year,
I could make a chiffonier.

'T wont be long before it's done,
 Now I've boughten tools enough;
Buyin' cushions will be fun,
 And some paint and varnish stuff.
Pa 'll be deeply touched, I know,
At my 'conomisin' so.

HANGING THE STOCKINGS

CHRISTMAS EVE! It's Christmas eve!
Supper's cleared away, —
Seems as if I can't believe
That to-day's to-day!
— I don't see a thing, do you,
We can hang a stockin' to?

For a month or just about,
Days would hardly stir,
Though I crossed their places out
On the calendar.
— Pins or nails 'll never stick
In this hard old chimney brick.

P'raps as soon as night's begun
He'll come stealing in!
My! It makes the shivers run
Up and down my skin.
— May n't I pound a nail up here
In the woodwork, Mother dear?

Hanging the Stockings

Daddy's sock 'll never do, —

Not a toy would fit.

S'pose we let him stand his shoe

Just in under it?

— There! They 're done. I 'm sleepy, some.

Bet to-morrow 'll never come!

THE EAVESDROPPERS

IF little boys don't hurry off to bed
On Christmas eve, an' try to go sleep,
But stay awake an' hide around an' peep
(Er so the grown-up folks have always
said),
Then Santa Claus 'll frown an' shake his
head,
An' gather all their presents in a heap —
Espeshully the ones they 'd wanta keep —
An' give 'em all to other boys instead.

But every year I've wanted so to see!
An' maybe he 'll not find me hiding here.
But if he *did*, an' left no toys for me,
I 'd be ez glad I peeked — er pretty near.
Unless he was so cross that maybe he
Would take away the things he left last
year!

FATHER SPEAKS

MERRY CHRISTMAS, one and all!

What a sunny holiday!
Eat our breakfast in the hall?

Just exactly as you say.
Move that tree a little bit,
I keep falling over it.

Children, show me all your toys,
There is room to spread them here.

Yes, that *is* a jolly noise, —

Hold it further from my ear!
Don't restrain 'em, let 'em play,
Christmas is the children's day.

Just the things you want have come?

Queer how Santy seems to know!
Yes, old fellow, pound your drum,
You may smash it sooner, so.
What? More slippers for your dad?
That makes seven pairs I've had.

Father Speaks

Mary, give that child a lift,
Those are my cigars he's on.
Postman calling for a gift?
'Fraid that my last cent has gone.
Don't you think it would be wise
Next month to economize?

Turn that baby up-side-down!
See — he's swallowing a wire!
Hello, Uncle! You in town?
Help! the Christmas tree's on fire!
Bring some water right away!
Whoop, Hurrah! It's Christmas Day.

AN OLD CHRISTMAS CAROL

OH wake ye, little children,
And be of goodlie cheer.
Yon sun so high along the sky
Hath shone two thousand year.
And once it saw a little child
In manger lying undefiled,
And all about the cattle mild
Did lovingly draw near.
So wake ye, little children,
And be of goodlie cheer.

Oh wake ye, little children,
And let each heart be gay.
Good Will to Men they carolled then,
And why should ye delay?
Awake, awake, and rise and sing,
And greet ye every living thing,
For man and beast did greet your King
On that first Christmas day!
Then wake ye, little children,
For this is Christmas day.



AUG 15 1910



One copy del. to Cat. Div.

